



Recycle This! Newsletter

*Newsletter of the Maine State Planning Office, Waste Management & Recycling Program * June 1999*

1998 Municipal/Regional Recycling Reports - Initial Observations

SPO has been quite pleased with the municipal reports that have been received so far, and initial results indicate that most municipalities or regions have maintained their recycling rate, or increased their recycling rate.

45 regions (representing 239 municipalities) and 157 individual municipalities have submitted their 1998 solid waste/recycling reports to the State Planning Office (SPO). About 25 municipalities and 5 regions are in the process of compiling their solid waste reports.

As a new service this year, SPO has compiled and graphed both the recycling rate and recycled tonnage from 1993-1998 for each town or region. These two graphs were sent to each town or region along with their 1998 Recycling Report. These graphs allow municipalities to take a look at how recycling has progressed over the past six years.



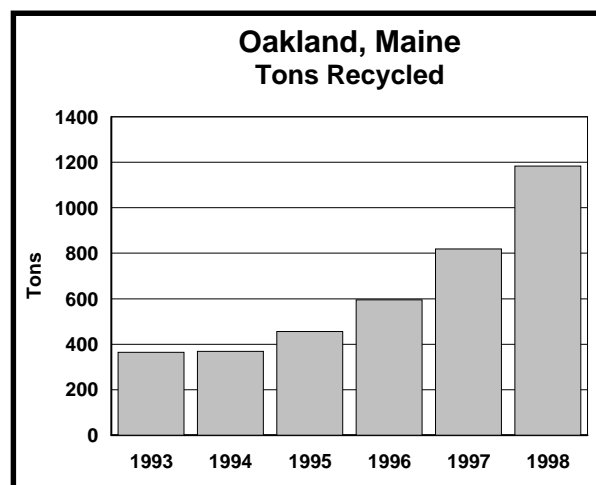
Recycling Rate Trends

Preliminary analysis indicates that over the six year period from 1993-1998:

- recycling rates *increased* in 14 regions (representing 105 municipalities) and in 66 individual municipalities;
- recycling rates were *relatively constant* in 9 regions (representing 45 municipalities) and in 30 individual municipalities;
- recycling rates *increased and then decreased* in 12 municipalities;
- recycling rates *decreased* in three regions (representing 20 municipalities) and in 20 individual municipalities;
- recycling rates were *erratic* in three

regions (representing 11 municipalities) and in 19 individual municipalities.

Perhaps a better indicator of a town's recycling progress is the number of tons recycled. The examination and graphing of the actual tonnage of material recycled, in addition to recycling rate calculation, was another new effort made by SPO this year. In general, the number of tons recycled paralleled the recycling rate. For example, the town of Oakland showed a dramatic increase in the number of tons recycled from 1993 to 1998, which is reflected by the fact that their recycling rate has risen from 12-43% over the past six years. (Oakland received an award for Most Improved Recycling Program at the Maine Recycling & Solid Waste Conference.)



One of the unique conditions that has come into play in 1998's recycling reports is ice storm damaged wood. To date, 59 towns and/or regions reported processing a total 62,224 tons of wood from the ice storm of 1998. SPO allowed a maximum of ten additional percentage points for recycling ice storm wood.

An examination of the 1998 recycling reports from individual towns or regions, as well as the six year trends in recycling rates and tons recycled, indicate that each town or region has its own special characteristics. Service center towns or cities with commercial centers generally have higher recycling rates because commercial recyclables are included in their reports. In general, a much higher percentage of the commercial waste stream can be recycled compared with the residential waste stream. Rural regions or regions with little commercial activity tend to have more modest recycling rates.

Perhaps the most important conclusion that can be drawn from the data collected over the past six years is that each municipality or region is unique. As a result, the recycling rates calculated by SPO are most useful to analyze trends *within* a specific community. Using these numbers to compare rates between towns or regions may not be appropriate due to the different styles of reporting.

After all the municipal and regional reports are processed, an analysis of the 1998 recycling data will be completed. In addition, trends from 1993 to 1998 will be evaluated. A report on the results of the analysis will be available by the end of the summer.

Copies of 1998 reports, recycling rates and tons recycled from 1993-1998 may be obtained from Hank Tyler at 207-287-1489 or by e-mail at hank.tyler@state.me.us.

Getting a Handle on Program Costs



New Recycling Cost Report Geared for Maine Communities

The State Planning Office (SPO) has contracted with the Northeast Recycling Council (NERC) to do a study of the major components of recycling and solid waste programs, such as whether a town has curbside or drop-off collection, and evaluate the impact of each component on the overall cost and effectiveness of the program. NERC has been focusing its research on the other northeastern states, in order to provide us with a regional perspective on this issue. NERC's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of recycling in the Northeast while maximizing its full environmental and economic benefits.

What makes this report unique is that it was developed with Maine communities in mind. It will focus on the types of communities and waste management arrangements that are representative of Maine communities. For example, while many parts of the country use large regional recycling facilities (e.g. MRFs), many Maine towns use smaller recycling facilities that service just a few communities. In addition, because many towns use local transfer stations for drop-off garbage and recycling, a portion of the report will be devoted to evaluating these options. While NERC will not be conducting any new surveys, or generating new data, the report will synthesize much of the available research throughout the country and tailor it to fit the needs of Maine communities.

The report should be completed by the end of June, 1999. After the report is submitted to SPO, we intend to use this report, in conjunction with other cost analysis tools, to help towns analyze their solid waste costs and options.

New Intern to Conduct Program Cost Study

Kirk Klausmeyer, from Belfast, has been hired by the Waste Management and Recycling Program as an intern for this summer. He will be a senior at Dartmouth College next year, working toward a double major in Environmental Studies and Economics. Kirk has been active in recycling and other environmental activities on the Dartmouth campus.

Kirk's primary task this summer will be assisting in the collection and review of Maine municipal solid waste program cost data so that we will be able to determine average costs for various types of municipal programs. We will then be able to compare those costs with similar regional data that the Northeast Recycling Council is gathering for us. He will also be assisting with other projects underway.

Kirk will be starting with us in the middle of June and working through the better part of August. The Waste Management & Recycling Program is looking forward to having him aboard.



BioCycle Northeast Conference to be held in Maine

Mark your calendars for September 13, 14 & 15, 1999. The BioCycle Northeast Conference '99: *Composting And Recycling — Strategies For Project Success*, will be held in Portland, Maine. This conference is co-sponsored by Maine State Planning Office, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Department of Agriculture. There will be two days of workshops and presentations with a field trip planned to a local compost facility ('hands on opportunity') for day number three.

The conference program/agenda is being finalized and will be posted soon on the BioCycle web site (www.jgpress.com) along with registration information. The State Planning Office will be doing a separate mailing for registration for this conference with reduced registration fees for municipal officials and employees.

Grants Update

It has been a year since SPO announced that grants funds were available, and the last round of municipal recycling grants projects are in various stages of progress:

- ✓ Six of the projects have been completed, including: the purchase of a compost screen by Lincoln County Recycling; horizontal baler upgrades by Mid Maine Solid Waste Association and the Town of Oxford; completed expansion of the Recycling Facility at Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District; and the purchase of recycling bins by the towns of Stetson and Alton;
- ✓ Five more projects are underway and in the process of invoicing for work completed;
- ✓ Ten projects are ready to get started; and
- ✓ The remaining six are awaiting start up while they meet special conditions of their contract agreements or clear up unexpected delays in implementation.

If your program was awarded a grant and you have any questions about the process or its status, please contact Sam Morris at 207-287-8054 or by e-mail at sam.morris@state.me.us.

Soon-to-be-Released Educational Resources

SPO recently sent out an announcement for two new educational resources that we are making available to municipalities. For those of you who may have missed the mailing, the new resources are outlined below:

Community Guide to Composting Leaf and Yard Trimmings in Maine

Co-produced by SPO and Maine Department of Environmental Protection, this guide provides information on: what composting is; basic methods of composting; how to select and develop a compost site; relevant, newly revised solid waste regulations; step-by-step site operations and management instructions; troubleshooting; and Maine-specific composting advice. The guide also contains an extensive reference section, a list of current sources of technical assistance, and a sample monitoring form.

Recycling Promotion Resource Packet

This packet contains a variety of educational materials on the subjects of recycling, waste reduction, buying recycled, household hazardous waste, and composting. Included in the packet will be SPO-produced fact sheets, special event planning guides, sample public service announcements, model graphics for creating recycling promotional material (new and improved), and much more! The materials in this packet are designed to help you improve your public outreach and educational efforts on a low budget.

These resources have been designed as working documents and will be produced in a 3-ring binder format in order to allow for further additions. Both the Compost Guide and the Resource Packet are expected to be completed by early summer. For more information or to request copies, contact Shannon Haines at 207-287-8053 or by e-mail at shannon.haines@state.me.us.

Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District Evaluates Pay-As-You-Throw

The Pleasant River Solid Waste Disposal District (PRSWDD) has implemented their 'Pay-as-You-Throw' (PAYT) solid waste program and prepared a report on their experiences. This was a demonstration project funded by SPO in an effort to provide communities with a document describing the process that a region went through in developing this type of program. PRSWDD provides solid waste management services to seven towns in Washington County. They chose a PAYT program after concluding it would be the best way to control their solid waste costs. The report, compiled by facility manager Lee Yeaton, details the steps they took to institute the program, barriers encountered and the impressive results of the program.

Some of the results of the program that are highlighted in the report include:

- decrease in total net costs to towns (\$258,080/year to \$157,192/year)
- decrease in costs per person to manage waste (\$44.54/person to \$27.15/person)
- 47% reduction in total MSW disposed.

As the program was being promoted, it was noted that a number of residents began using 'backyard burn barrels' as a method of reducing their individual costs for managing their solid wastes. Many residents also took pallets to construct backyard composting bins for their kitchen organics. However, according to the report, there have been very few known problems related to illegal dumping.

Another useful feature of the report is the results of two waste audits — one before the PAYT program began and one after. Because there is very little current waste composition data from Maine communities, this information may be of great interest to anyone in the solid waste field.

To obtain a copy of this report, please call Lisa Baldwin or Shannon Haines at 1-800-662-4545 or 207-287-8050.

Electronic Options

If you have e-mail or internet access, we want to know. While SPO believes that a regular source of information from the state on recycling and waste reduction is valuable, we are always seeking ways to reduce our reliance on paper, as well as save money for the state. So if you would like to receive this newsletter via e-mail, please let us know and we can send it to your e-mail address.



SPO is also working to link all the municipal and regional solid waste & recycling programs together through its web page. If your program has a web page, either on its own or through your municipal government home page, please let us know and we'll add it as a link to our home page. You can contact us through SPO's Waste Management & Recycling Home Page (www.state.me.us/spo/wm&r/wmhome.htm), or e-mail Lisa Baldwin at lisa.m.baldwin@state.me.us to forward us your e-mail address or URL for your home page.



- 27% increase in recycling from the previous year

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1-800-662-4545 or 207-287-8050
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Maine to Celebrate America Recycles Day (ARD) in 1999!

November 15th, the day when all of America takes the opportunity to promote and celebrate recycling, is six months away, and it is not too soon for us to start planning and taking action. We are looking for people who want to make ARD happen in Maine in 1999. A number of you expressed an interest in ARD at the MRRA annual conference at the Samoset in April. If you didn't get to the conference, now is your chance to sign on.

ARD is a unique partnership of local, state, and federal programs, businesses and non-profit organizations. The goal of ARD is to increase both recycling and the purchase of recycled content products across the U. S. The theme for this year is "*For Our Children's Future...Buy Recycled Today.*" As in previous years, there will be a national pledge/contest with a Green Dream House as the Grand Prize. In 1998, Maine's first year, we held around two dozen events and collected approximately 800 pledges to recycle more and buy recycled content products.

SPO would like to start planning for November now by forming an ARD steering committee. The committee will look at: organizing a statewide recycling and/or buy recycled awareness day; creating a campaign timeline that tracks local and statewide events; how to involve schools and the business community; sponsorships; promoting the day among the 200+ recycling program managers and committees at work in Maine today; and much more.

Whether you want to do something in your local schools, at your place of business, in your local recycling program, or all of the above, contact Sam Morris at 207-287-8054 or by e-mail at sam.morris@state.me.us.

Coming Soon

New **Composting** and **Promotional resources** available in **late June**. (Please see page 3 for more details.)

The **annual meeting** of **Maine Resource Recovery Association** will be held on **Thursday, June 24** at the **Kennebec Valley Technical Center** in Fairfield.

The Northeast **BioCycle Conference** will be held on **September 13, 14 & 15** in Portland. (Please see Page 2 for more details.)

America Recycles Day (ARD) is **November 15th!** See the article on this page for more information on ARD!